

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

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**Postmortem Examination Review Summary #015**

Horse Information: 3-year-old Thoroughbred.

Incident Summary: This horse was injured just past the ¼ pole while racing. The horse was sedated with detomidine, a Kimzey splint was applied to the injured limb and the horse was vanned off the racetrack for evaluation. Due to the poor prognosis, the horse was euthanized by the attending veterinarian with pentobarbital.

Necropsy Summary: Necropsy examination revealed the left medial proximal sesamoid bone was fractured with a focal, osteopenic lesion in the subchondral bone. In the (intact) right front medial proximal sesamoid there was a focal lesion in the analogous location. There was a sagittal and incomplete transverse rupture of the intersesamoidean ligament. The distal straight sesamoid ligament was also ruptured as was the medial collateral sesamoid ligament. Additional findings included a non-displaced chip fracture of the dorsoproximal P1 (long pastern bone) in the left forelimb, palmar osteochondral disease, transverse ridge arthrosis, dorsal metacarpal disease, and chronic proliferative synovitis.

Racing/Training History: This horse had over 470 days of uninterrupted training and racing in its career. During the last 90 days prior to injury the horse had 57 furlongs of racing and timed workouts for an average of 0.63 furlongs per day. The career high-speed furlong events experienced by this horse was 29 % higher than any of the nine 3-year-old cohorts that raced at the track on the date of this horse's injury. This horse was eased in the previous race and placed on the Steward's List for poor performance. The trainer stated the jockey rushed the horse to the lead unnecessarily. Later, the horse worked a slow 5 furlongs (1:05) to get off the Steward's List. The owner wanted to race the horse one more time before turnout.

Veterinary History Summary: This horse received phenylbutazone, methocarbamol, DMSO, and ACTH 2 days prior to racing. This horse received shock wave therapy to the lumbar region as the horse was responsive to palpation of the area and traveled mildly choppy in the hind limbs.

Pre-race Examinations: Pre-race examinations noted mild lumbar sensitivity, mild front fetlock joint capsule hypertrophy and mild reduction in range of movement, and slight exostosis of the dorsal surface of left metacarpus.

Conclusion: Necropsy examination revealed pre-existing lesions in both front medial proximal sesamoid bones. This represents a bilateral, repetitive, overuse injury. Research has shown that horses experiencing excessive high-speed furlongs/day are at increased risk for a fatal skeletal injury. Expanded use of MRI or PET scans may be helpful in preventing these injuries in the future.